

## **Avery Elementary School**

One cannot mention Avery Elementary School in Webster Groves, Missouri, without first thinking of family, tradition, academic excellence, unsurpassed parent involvement, diversity, and commitment to the community. Since 1890, Avery Elementary School has been a dominant figure in the development of northeast Webster Groves as well as a great contributor to the entire city. Originally known as the Tuxedo Park School residing in the town of Tuxedo Park, the school became part of the Webster Groves School District in 1907 when the towns of Webster Groves and Tuxedo Park merged. In 1916 the Tuxedo Park School was renamed Avery School in honor of Edward M. Avery, a prominent citizen and educator in Webster Groves and St. Louis. Avery School is situated on part of the original Avery family farm. From a four-room frame building to a 38 room three-story brick structure that is still continuing to undergo expansion, Avery School has stood tall not only as a neighborhood landmark but as a vital, caring, constantly contributing neighbor. Perhaps not unique to smaller towns within the state but definitely unique to a community within a large metropolitan area, Avery School is a school where several generations of families have been educated. It is not uncommon to talk to students and staff, their parents, their grandparents and sometimes great-grandparents who are Avery alums. Like a family, Avery is a place for people to come together. Everyone from the custodians to the principal, the students to the parents, and the volunteers to the visitors are valued as treasured members of the Avery All-Star family.

Entering the main entrance at 909 Bompert, one is immediately aware of the welcoming atmosphere of the school. It is not just the display of the bright school colors of orange, black and white and the presence of the Avery School "A" logo upon the walls that gives one a sense of welcome, but the bright smiling faces and friendly greetings from the staff and students affirm that Avery is a warm, caring place. Every morning the principal and other staff members make themselves visible and available throughout the building to the students, parents and volunteers entering the school before the day begins. A special welcome to all of the "Avery All-Stars" is made daily by the principal over the intercom system, followed by student-generated announcements and the "Pledge of Allegiance." After school has begun, Avery PTO parent volunteers serve as "official greeters" to any visitors entering the building further ensuring the quality of the inviting welcome to the school.

Student-centered, flexible groups and differentiated instruction characterize the classrooms at Avery School. Small class sizes enable teachers to know students personally in order to individualize instruction to meet their academic and personal needs. Student learning is continuously evaluated to individualize instruction as teachers strive to narrow the achievement gap for all students. Special school programs such as Project Plus and WINGS serve the gifted and talented students in grades K-5 at every level of service. Reading specialists incorporate the Reading Recovery Program at the earliest levels as well as supply support for students in the upper grades through small group reading instruction. Avery School also sponsors the Oasis volunteer tutoring program for at risk readers. Math Club is a small group program offered to students to increase their math skills. In addition, tutoring programs are offered before and after school. Character education is continually stressed with the use of "All-Star Behavior" principles. Unique to the Webster Groves School District and in its eleventh year at Avery, is the Multi-Age classroom that consists of three teachers and approximately 60 students. This is a program designed for 1st, 2nd & 3rd graders' developmental needs regardless of chronological age. Technology is a prominent instructional tool throughout the building. All 5th grade classrooms implement the e-MINTS instructional model. Third and Fourth grade levels are currently SMART classrooms. All of the other classrooms are equipped with at least three stand-alone computers. All teachers have a wireless laptop computer and access to carts of wireless laptop computers and portable LCD projectors for classroom use. Teacher-sponsored after school clubs are provided to the students throughout the year. The Avery All-Star, the official school newsletter, and the school website are maintained by Avery staff.

The Avery School parent involvement is a vital part of Avery's existence since the PTO's formation in 1912. Parents and staff actively collaborate on various fund-raising and educational activities during the school year such as The Book Fair, Community Connection/Social Justice Meetings, School Safety Committee, the 58-year old parent-directed annual play, the Avery student newspaper, and many other events.

Avery Elementary School serves as a launching pad to life-long learning and personal growth, a haven of security and "home" for each and every member of the Avery All-Star family.